



Cooney State Park Draft Management Plan

Public Open Houses - February 2012




Meeting Purpose

Solicit public comments on draft management plan and priorities for Cooney State Park for guiding park management over next ten years.





Tonight's Agenda

- Planning process
- Draft management plan
- Questions & feedback  your action here!
- Next steps

Housekeeping:

Refreshments

Please quiet cell phones

Bathrooms

Take breaks as needed



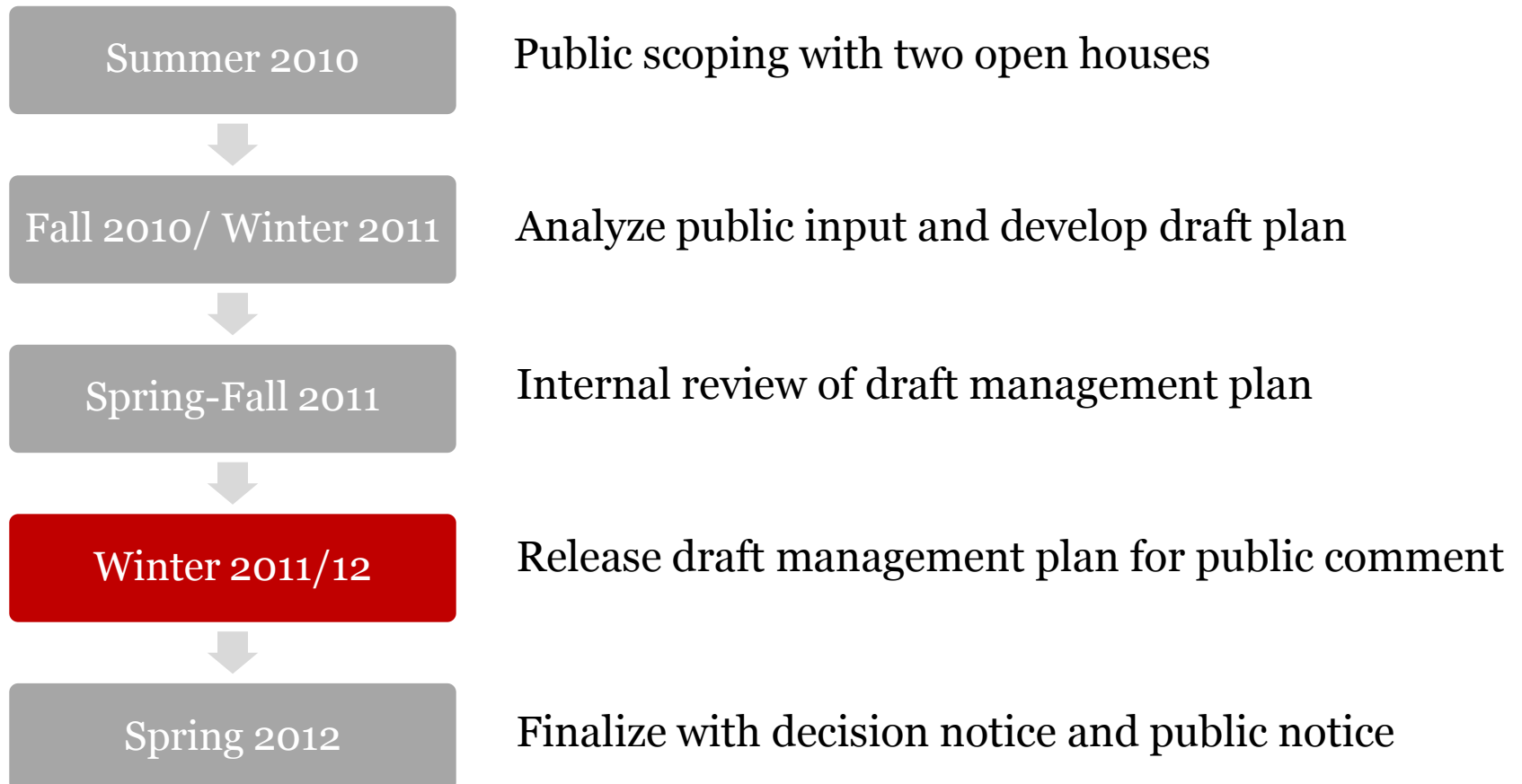
Purpose of Management Plan

Guides visitor services, recreation opportunities resource conservation, education and operations and maintenance efforts for the next 10+ years.

- Set a long-term vision
- Establish management goals, objectives, and actions
- Provide a basis for resource needs
- Provide continuity and direction
- Prioritize efforts & funding
- Engage park visitors and general public
- Consider all the options
- Build long-term communication and relationships with park staff and visitors, neighbors, groups



Planning Process & Timeline





Public Role in Planning Process

- Public Scoping
 - Hosted two meetings
 - Gather insight on vision, priorities, and concerns
- Web page on stateparks.mt.gov
 - Documents posted
 - Updates
 - Meeting dates
- Open houses
 - Gather feedback on draft management plan
 - Written comments solicited on draft plan



Public Comment Period

- 21-day comment period:
February 10 – March 2, 2012
- Plan available:
 - Online at stateparks.mt.gov
 - FWP Region 5 Billings office
 - Joliet Public Library
 - Open houses
 - Call park office at 406-445-2326
- Written public comments by email, letter, fax

Submit written comments to:

Cooney Plan Comments
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Email: CooneyPlanComments@mt.gov

Fax: 406-444-4952

Comments due by 5:00 pm on Friday, March 2



Montana State Parks





STILLWATER
CARBON

Cooney State Park

Chapman Creek
Red Lodge Creek
COONEY RESERVOIR
COONEY DAM ROAD
COONEY DAM SOUTH SHORE RD
Willow Creek
ROBERTS-COONEY RD

212

TO BILLINGS
35 MILES

Joliet

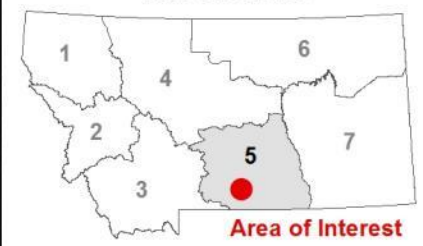
Roberts

TO RED LODGE
12.5 MILES



0 1 2
Miles

FWP REGIONS



Area of Interest



Cooney State Park Mission

To provide easy and safe public access to water-related and land-based recreational activities by providing high quality and well-maintained facilities, friendly, responsive, and helpful service, resource management and collaborative partnerships.

Vision

- Outstanding service
- Enjoyable vacations
- Staff pride
- Meet customer expectations
- Partnerships

Service

- Public safety and visitor protection integrated into park operations.
- Professional incident response

Safety

- Balancing natural and recreational resources
- Monitoring invasive species

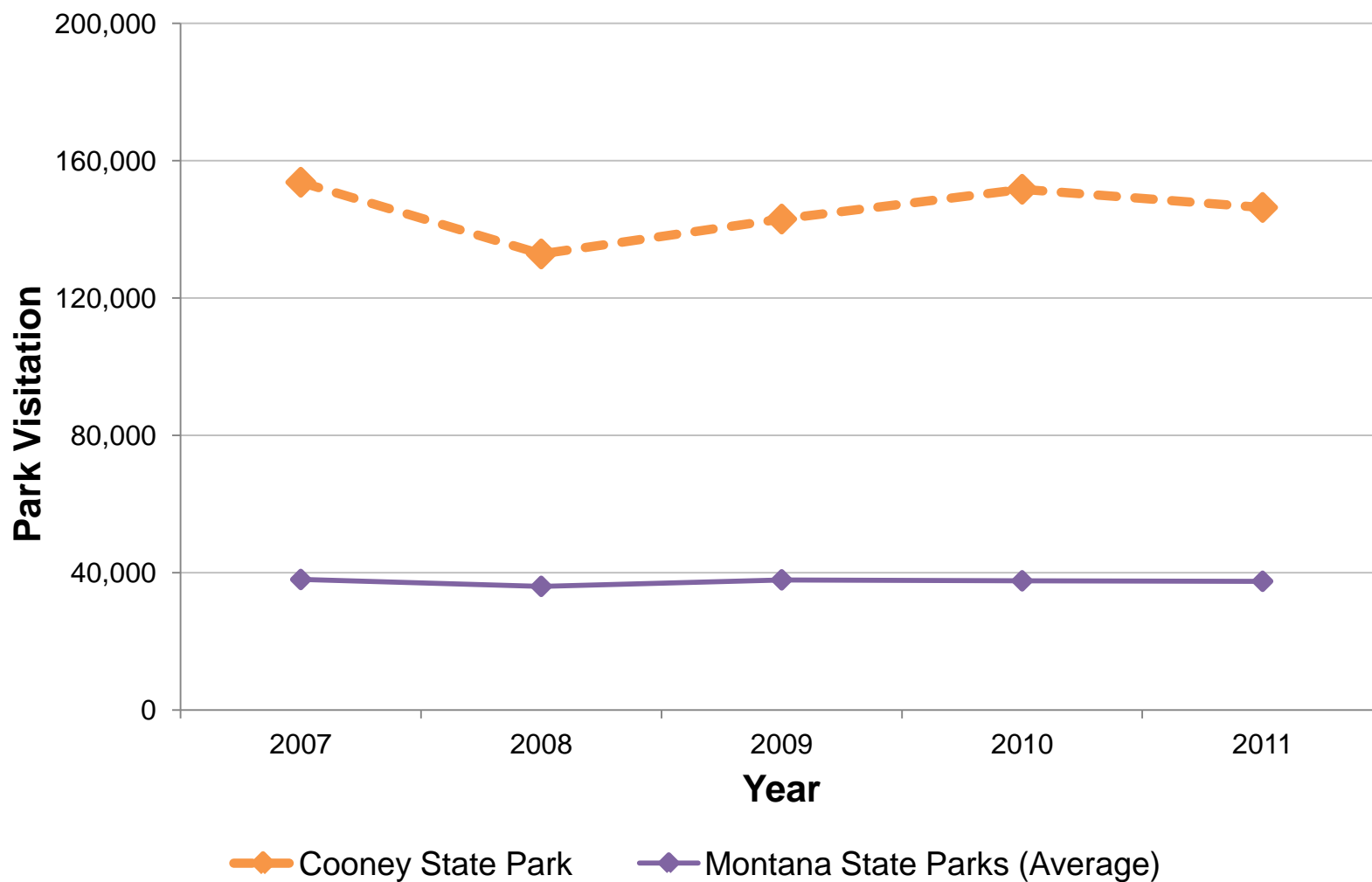
Stewardship

- Sustainable stream of revenue resources
- High standard of park operations
- Adequate resources to meet needs

Sustainability



Cooney State Park Visitation 2007-2011





Public Safety Initiative

- New Park Warden Program
- Hired full-time in 2011
- Continue to partner and cooperate with FWP Game Wardens and Carbon County Sheriff





Public Scoping: What We Heard

What is your vision?

- Universal accessibility
- Natural resources
- Better boating access
- More designated swimming areas
- Public trail
- More fish habitat

What is most important?

- Fishing
- Maintenance and improvements
- Day use/picnic shelters
- Electrical hook-ups
- Wildlife viewing
- Concessions
- Good communication with neighbors

What are your concerns?

- Law enforcement on the lake
- Overcrowding
- Litter
- Maintain ability to irrigate
- Public education regarding reservoir history
- Boat ramp use



Draft Management Plan

- Draft plan based on:
 - Public scoping meetings
 - Cooney Park Visitor Survey (2006)
 - Management expertise
 - Montana State Parks goals
- Identified 7 management themes
 - Brief discussion of the issues
 - One or more goals
 - Accompanying objectives and actions





Park Management Themes

1. Recreation Management
2. Public Safety
3. Facilities and Services
4. Interpretation and Education
5. Park Operations
6. Natural Resources
7. Cultural Resources



Example: Recreation Management

Goal	Objectives	Actions
6.1.1: Cooney State Park is maintained as a high quality recreational destination for local residents and non-resident visitors.	A. Improve and diversify camping opportunities and facilities for visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop additional individual and group campsites for variety of camping types including tents, trailers, and RVs.
	B. Continue to promote Cooney State Park as a family-oriented destination with enhanced visitor amenities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate the requirements to add unsupervised designated swimming areas around the shoreline and close to camping areas.



Proposed Priority 1 Objectives

Recreational Management

- Improve and diversify camping opportunities and facilities for visitors.

Public Safety

- Actively promote and educate people about water and boating safety.
- Integrate public safety and law enforcement into daily park operations.
- Maintain a safe and user acceptable watercraft capacity on the reservoir.

Facilities and Services

- Develop additional camping opportunities at the park.
- Improve road conditions throughout and around the park.

Park Operations

- Maintain camping reservation system.
- Maintain high level of entrance and camping fee compliance.

Natural Resources

- Plant more trees in the park in key use areas.
- Monitor and take action to keep Aquatic Invasive Species out of Cooney Reservoir.



Proposed Priority 2 Objectives

Park Operations

- Create additional revenue sources at Cooney State Park.

Interpretation and Education

- Develop and present interpretive and summer weekend campfire talks and interpretive programming.

Cultural Resources

- Compile all heritage information into one report, with an abridged version available for public use.



Public Comments on Draft Plan

- What questions do you have?
 - Plan
 - Management issues
 - Goals, objectives, actions
 - Prioritized objectives
- Submit written comments
 - On comment forms (information on back)
 - Email, fax, mail comments



Comments must be submitted in written form!



Next Steps

Summer 2010

Public scoping with two open houses



Fall 2010/ Winter 2011

Analyze public input and develop draft plan



Spring/ Summer 2011

Firm up draft management plan



Winter 2011/12

Release draft management plan for public comment



Spring 2012

Finalize with decision notice and notify public



Questions?

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Maren Murphy - State Parks Planner

406-444-3364

marenmurphy@mt.gov

Website

www.stateparks.mt.gov

Submit written comments by March 2:

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